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AUTHOR Windham, Patricia
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ABSTRACT

This report presents the results of a longitudinal study of 1993-94 graduates of Florida's public high schools who enrolled in the Florida Community College System (FCCS) between fall 1994 and spring 1999. The study focused on three questions: (1) how many members of the class of 1993-94 were enrolled in the FCCS from 1994 to 1999? (2) What did the students want to achieve? and (3) What was the relationship between student intent and awards earned? The total enrollment of 1993-94 graduates during the 5-year period was 46,773. Enrollment ranged from a high of 31,331 in 1994-95 to 14,277 in 1998-99. Of the total enrollment, 69.7 percent of students wanted to earn an Associate of Arts (AA) degree at some point, 18.5 percent wanted to earn an Associate of Science (AS) degree, 4.8 percent sought a vocational certificate, and 1.3 percent a credit certificate. Students earning an AA degree changed their intent less often than those earning an AS or certificate did. Four tables include: (1) public high school class of 1993-94 attendance in FCCS by program intent and award earned; (2) student intent by award received for AA, AS, credit certificate, and vocational certificate; and (3) award earned by award intent. (RDG)

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Florida Public High School Class of 1993-94

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Data Trend 17

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Introduction

The Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (PEPC) has been following the public high school class of 1993-94 as they entered higher education. However, their longitudinal study has been limited to students entering either the Florida Community College System (FCCS) or the State University System (SUS) in the Fall 1994 term. This Data Trend expands upon that study by looking at students from that class who entered the FCCS at any time between Summer 1994 and Spring 1999.

In keeping with the original Legislative charge, the initial work done by PEPC was limited to Fall 1994 entering students who met the admissions requirements of the SUS. The cohort was then expanded to include all Fall 1994 entrants. This expanded cohort contained slightly over 19,000 students in the FCCS.

While this study provided some excellent information related to the specific legislative assignment, the FCCS felt it did not capture all of the students who would eventually enter that System. There were also concerns that restricting the cohort based upon initial student intent would exclude students who eventually earned an associate degree. For these reasons, the FCCS requested PEPC share the social security numbers of the students in their original public high school database. This Data Trend is based upon the results of matching the entire set of public high school graduates with five years of data contained in the FCCS annual Student Data Base files.

Study Questions

A goal of this study was to present a broader picture of what was happening to the class of 1993-94 than was presented by the PEPC Longitudinal Study. The study questions were

- How many members of the class of 1993-94 were ever enrolled in the FCCS from 1994-95 to 1998-99?
- What did they want to achieve?
- What was the relationship between student intent and awards earned?

Results

Although these students form the traditional cohort for beginning students in higher education, their enrollment patterns do not fit the traditional format. As seen in the differences between the number tracked by PEPC and the number found in 1994-95, many FCCS students are entering in terms other than Fall. The number of students enrolled in the FCCS varied from a high of 31,331 in 1994-95 to 14,277 in 1998-99. These enrollments represent 46,773 students. This shows that many students are waiting at least one year before entering the FCCS.

The second area considered was that of student intent. Part of the selection criteria used by PEPC was the program category assigned to a student by an institution. This data element has the advantage of

reflecting the course work actually taken by the students. However, it does not necessarily reflect a student's initial intent or that the outcome achieved was different from the student intent.

The most prevalent intent was to earn an Associate in Arts (AA) degree. Of the 46,773 students attending, 32,623, or 69.7%, wanted an AA at some point. The Associate in Science (AS) degree was the second most sought outcome with 8,681 students, or 18.5%, of the group wanting that at some point. Four point eight percent (4.8%) wanted a vocational certificate and 1.3% a credit certificate. Student intent can and often does vary during the course of an academic career. Thus, just because a student wanted a certain award at one point in time does not mean that was their final intent. Table 2 shows the intent for each year of students who eventually earned the various awards. For example, 6,231 of the 7,220 students earning an AA degree were enrolled in 1994-95. Five thousand two hundred and ninety-two (5,292) of those 6,231 intended to earn an AA, but the remaining fifteen percent had other intentions. The remaining years and awards can be interpreted in the same manner.

Another way of considering this question is, of those students who ever wanted a given award and eventually earned an award, did they earned what they wanted? Table 3 shows that of those students ever intending to earn an AA and earning some type award, eighty-eight percent did in fact earn the AA. An additional 4.2% earned an AS. Only 7.4% earned certificates instead of degrees.

Conclusions

High school students continuing their education in the Florida Community College System do not necessarily attend in the traditional ways. Of the students entering the FCCS within five years of graduation, about two-thirds did so the first year. About two-thirds of the first-year entrants began in Fall. If this attendance pattern is typical of current high school graduates, studies limited to the Fall term of the year following graduation will capture less than half of the students who attend within five years of graduation. While this attendance pattern is probably more typical for community college students than for four-year institutions, it needs to be kept in mind when designing research studies. The time covered by the annual *Readiness for Postsecondary Education* report is one year. This time frame often shows about one-third of a graduating class continuing in the FCCS. By extending the time to five years, this study showed that fifty-six percent of the class took courses in the FCCS.

Community colleges offer a variety of services for students and many are unsure of their final intent when they first enter. Students earning an AA degree seem to change their intent less often than those earning the AS or a certificate.

An ongoing discussion theme in higher education is the notion that community colleges "cool out" the aspirations of the students attending this type institution, i.e., diverting students headed for baccalaureate degrees into vocational tracks. This study indicates that the award earned by AA seeking students is the AA degree.

Produced by the Office of Educational Services and Research, Division of Community Colleges
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1344, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400
For more information, contact Dr. Pat Windham, Director of Educational Effectiveness and Research

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Department of Education • 1314 Turlington Building • 325 W. Gaines Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
www.dcc.firn.edu

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The Public High School Class of 1993-94 Attendance in the FCCS						
(N=82,788 with SSN's)						
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	Unduplicated Over Time
Enrolled:	31,331	30,742	24,704	18,335	14,277	46,773
Program Intent:						
Associate in Arts	21,568	21,227	17,212	11,958	8,611	32,623
Associate in Science	4,021	3,784	3,167	2,715	2,403	8,681
Credit Certificate	133	132	175	238	198	630
Vocational Certificate	434	612	661	693	617	2,236
Adult High School Diploma	42	27	22	28	25	
Degree Seeking - Undecided	452	369	269	203	147	
No Formal Award	2,487	2,682	1,621	1,171	967	
Applied Technology Diploma			1			
Adult Basic					7	
GED					4	
Not Applicable	1,783	1,570	1,336	1,126	1,103	
Award Earned:						
Associate in Arts	70	1,240	2,944	1,863	1,131	7,220
Associate in Science	2	29	177	216	249	665
Credit Certificate	37	78	66	86	78	323
Vocational Certificate	116	241	267	249	224	1,055

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Student Intent by Award Received					
Associate in Arts					
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Program Intent:					
Associate in Arts	5,292	6,094	5,531	3,096	1,464
Associate in Science	325	323	244	234	232
Credit Certificate	6	2	4	16	10
Vocational Certificate	6	12	10	10	37
Adult High School Diploma		1		1	
Degree Seeking - Undecided	104	43	19	7	3
No Formal Award	351	207	123	168	205
Applied Technology Diploma					
Adult Basic					
GED					
Not Applicable	147	101	152	212	204
Associate in Science					
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Program Intent:					
Associate in Arts	234	187	124	73	74
Associate in Science	274	401	464	392	240
Credit Certificate	4	4	13	15	7
Vocational Certificate	4	7	6	6	2
Adult High School Diploma					
Degree Seeking - Undecided	14	5	2	1	
No Formal Award	39	25	16	11	10
Applied Technology Diploma					
Adult Basic					
GED					
Not Applicable	29	8	10	17	18

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Student Intent by Award Received					
Credit Certificate					
Program Intent:	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Associate in Arts	99	106	81	49	38
Associate in Science	40	41	43	59	50
Credit Certificate	40	51	67	72	75
Vocational Certificate	5	5	11	14	10
Adult High School Diploma					
Degree Seeking - Undecided	2	7	6	4	
No Formal Award	14	10	7	5	8
Applied Technology Diploma					
Adult Basic					
GED					
Not Applicable	16	15	22	15	27
Vocational Certificate					
Program Intent:	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Associate in Arts	276	228	165	106	104
Associate in Science	121	121	101	92	94
Credit Certificate	9	16	22	16	16
Vocational Certificate	155	273	278	286	188
Adult High School Diploma	3			2	
Degree Seeking - Undecided	8	4	1	3	2
No Formal Award	33	23	20	15	17
Applied Technology Diploma					
Adult Basic					
GED					
Not Applicable	79	69	67	60	67

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Award Earned by Award Intent					
Award Intent	Award Earned				
	AA	AS	CCC	VCC	
AA	7,064	337	156	435	
AS	793	631	129	270	
CCC	30	31	204	65	
VCC	63	21	34	819	